

LUCHA LIBRE WEEKLY

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 5, 1992

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 24

\$1.00 PER ISSUE/1427 WEST DICKENS AVENUE/CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60614-3003

APOLO DANTES

Yes, that is my headline for this week – just "Apolo Dantes." Why, you ask? Because Dantes (Jose Luis Amezcua Curiel junior) just had one of the biggest weeks I can remember any wrestler's having in any country.

First, some history. Ric Flair often used to call the NWA World Heavyweight Championship the biggest prize in sports, or in wrestling. What is traditionally the biggest prize in all of lucha libre? For the last thirty-five years, it's been the NWA World Light Heavyweight Championship.

The first wrestling card was promoted in Mexico City in 1930 at the old el Fronton Nacional. Don Salvador Lutheroth Gonzales, founder of the present-day EMLL, promoted his first card – the card that began uninterrupted weekly runs in Mexico City – on September 21, 1933, at the old la Arena Mexico. Up until Salvador "Gori" Guerrero brought the NWA World Light Heavyweight Championship to Mexico City in 1957, the main prize promoted by the Lutheroth family was the NWA World Middleweight Championship. But, with the advent of the light heavyweight title, it eclipsed the status of the middleweight belt. Rarely, by the way, was the NWA World Heavyweight Championship defended in Mexico City. And, the UWA and WWA World Heavyweight Championships were belts promoted by young, upstart organizations, and not held in so high regard as the NWA Light Heavyweight title.

Though the EMLL eventually gained control of the Mexican National Heavyweight Championship in the 1980s and in 1991 began promoting a CMLL World Heavyweight Champion, the NWA Light Heavyweight title was, to the substantial number of traditionalists, hardcores, purists, and historians, the ultimate symbol of success in lucha libre.

In fact, the status of the belt was such that who should wear it was part of the reason the UWA split from the EMLL back in 1974. Also, fears of losing the belt to what became the AAA led, in part, to the decision not to have Saigon Dragon, el Ultimo Dragon (Yoshihiro Asai) win the title in Japan in April of this year. It was thought by myself and by many others that now that the AAA/EMLL split has shaken out, and that Dragon is staying with the EMLL long-term, that he would be in line to win the title next. Wrong.

During the month of July, la Arena Puebla has been having month-long cards to celebrate the 39th anniversary of the opening of the arena and of wrestling, the arena's first client, in the building. On July 11th, Pierroth junior met el Pirata Morgan in a CMLL World Heavyweight Championship match. On July 18th, local wrestlers Toro Bill and el Jabato met in a hair match. But on the undercard for that match, in the semifinal, Apolo Dantes pinned NWA World Light Heavyweight Champion el Satanico (Jose Daniel "Danielito" Lopez Lopez junior) in both the second and third falls of a six-man tag-team match and challenged el Satanico for the NWA World Light Heavyweight Championship.

That match was held on Saturday, July 25th, 1992, in Puebla, which is the capital city of the state of the same name about 50 to 60 miles west of Mexico City; there Dantes met el Satanico for the belt. Three falls and nearly thirty minutes later, Apolo Dantes had pinned el Satanico, once again in the second and third falls, and had become the new NWA World Light Heavyweight Champion.

His victory makes Apolo Dantes the youngest person to wear the biggest crown in lucha libre, as Dantes was born (see mini-biography #2 in this issue on page eight) on September 28, 1968, so he at the time of the title win, Dantes was 23 years, 10 months, and 27 days old. Lou Thesz was born in 1916 and won his first NWA World Heavyweight Championship in 1937, at age 20 or 21, so Dantes's title win would make him the second youngest NWA World Champion at any level. Apolo Dantes also becomes only the second son of a former NWA World Champion at any level (Heavyweight, Light Heavyweight, Junior Heavyweight, Middleweight, Tag-Team, or Welterweight) to hold a belt. From June 13, 1972 to June 29, 1973, from October 24, 1976 to February 11, 1977, from April 21, 1977 to June 2, 1978, from April 30, 1979 to January 20, 1980, and from February 15, 1980 to April 3, 1981, Alfonso Dantes (Jose Luis Amezcua) held the NWA World Light Heavyweight Championship on five occasions. Now his son holds the same title. The only other father-and-son combination to do this were Gori Guerrero (who had the longest title reign, from July 30th, 1960 to December 1966) and son Chavo Guerrero, who had one title reign, beating ironically enough Alfonso Dantes at the Olympic Auditorium in Los Angeles, California, on Friday night, February 11th, 1977

But that's not all that Dantes did in the past week. No, far from it.

* He also won a *caballera contra caballera* match! On Thursday, July 23rd, 1992, at la Arena Isabel in the garden city of Mexico, Cuernavaca, Morelos, Dantes had been pinned in the second and third falls in a six-man tag-team match by el Comando Ruso (Juan Carlos Torres Navarro). To save face and avoid humiliation, Dantes challenged Ruso to a hair match for the next EMLL card at that arena, the following Thursday night. Sure enough, come July 30th, Dantes emerged victorious, pinning Ruso in the first and third falls to win the hair of his "Russian" opponent. Official EMLL barber Pancho Penzalona then went to work and did his stuff. (P. S., The semifinal in that card saw el Dandy (Roberto Gutierrez Frias) defend the CMLL World Middleweight Championship versus el Negro Casas (Jose Casas Ruiz junior) but I do not yet have a result on that match.)

* Dantes also has had three singles victories (*mano a mano*) versus the wrestler with whom he has his current major feud. On Sunday, July 19th, 1992, Dantes won two singles matches over el Hijo del Solitario in the matter of ninety minutes. The first was at la Arena Mexico in Mexico City and was the *tercera* of a five-match card. Then the two went twenty miles west and had the same match in the main event at la Arena Naucalpan in the Mexico City suburb of the same name. Then, yet again, as the main event of the Tuesday night card held on July 28th at la Arena Coliseo in Mexico City, Dantes pinned el Hijo de Solitario yet again! By the way, at the Arena Mexico card, Dantes was booked versus la Bestia Salvaje, but for reasons of which I am not sure, the match-up was switched.

* I also have two other results for Dantes, and that will lead into this week's general summary of EMLL results, cards, and news. First, way back on July 7th, 1992, at la Arena Coliseo in Mexico City, Dantes was on the victorious side of a six-man tag-team match, as he, el Rayo de Jalisco junior, and el Hijo de Tinieblas defeated Emilio Charles junior, Jose "el Negro" Casas, and Gargola el Sultan two falls to one. I have two other results from that card. The semifinal saw Ringo Mendoza, el Solar II, and el Jalisco win two out of three falls from "The Team From Beyond The Grave" (el Cadaver de Ultratumba, el Espectro de Ultratumba, and el Espectro junior). And the *tercera* saw lady tecnicas Lola "Dinamita" Gonzales, Xochitl Hamada, and Selene win two out of three falls from Kaoru Maeda (lady wrestler from Japan's Universal Wrestling Federation), la Venus, and Tania la Berrerinda, ex-Tania la Guerrerilla.

* Dantes also led the winning side in the semifinal match-up at the Saturday, July 11th, 1992, card at la Arena Puebla. There, he teamed with el Rayo de Jalisco junior and Kato Kung Lee I to defeat the trio of el Satanico (which started that feud), Nitron, and Emilio Charles junior two falls to one. The main event from that card saw Pierroth junior cleanly retain the CMLL World Light Heavyweight Championship by making el Pirata Morgan (Francisco "Pedro" Ortiz Villanueva) submit in the third fall to a side *Gori Especial* backbreaker. And, the *tercera* that night, the only other result I have from this card, saw el Filoso and el Jabato win two out of three falls from el Supremo I and Toro Bill; that result set up the hair match on the 18th (which I do not have a result from) where Toro Bill met el Jabato.

* Dantes was also involved in the *tercera* at the television taping at la Arena Coliseo this week. That show was held on Friday, July 31st, 1992, at la Arena Coliseo in Mexico City, and was broadcast at 5:00 pm local time (MDT) on Channel 9, Televisa's XEW-TV, and on satellite, in Mexico City. Dantes's match had himself, el Cachorro Mendoza, and Ciclón Ramirez facing el Felino, el Hijo del Solitario, and Javier "el Monarca" Cruz. Results of that match and the rest of the card can be found in the late news section, which this week is expanded quite a bit.

* SPEAKING OF EL FELINO (ex-Babe Casas), I don't mean to slight him, for he has had a great month as well! First, on July 5th, 1992, at la Pista Arena Revolucion in Mexico City, Distrito Federal, Mexico, el Felino defeated Ciclón Ramirez two falls to one to become the new Mexican National Welterweight Champion. The finish of the third fall saw Ramirez submit cleanly to the scorpion death lock submission hold, though in a later interview Ramirez claimed that he never said "I quit" and blamed his loss on the referee, Jose Trejo. But, el Felino wasn't through. On Thursday, July 16th, 1992, at la Arena Isabel in Cuernavaca, Morelos, Mexico, el Felino defeated America (ex-el Pantera II) to become the third CMLL World Welterweight Champion. Unlike in the USA, in Mexico wrestlers are permitted to hold different belts until they are beaten (the exception being if they leave the territory, although Jose "el Negro" Casas is still being billed as UWA World Middleweight Champion). Then, on Wednesday, July 29th, 1992, at la Arena Ecatepec in Ecatepec, Mexico, Mexico, el Felino granted a rematch to America and again el Felino emerged victorious. By the way, the last wrestler I can recall who held both World and National Championships in the same weight class was el Dandy. El Dandy won the NWA World Middleweight Championship from el Ángel Azteca on June 1st, 1990, at la Arena Coliseo in Mexico City, and at that time was already Mexican National Middleweight Champion. On July 27th, 1990, he lost the National title to Javier "el Monarca" Cruz and on August 1, 1990, he lost the World Title to Atlantis. What strikes me as really odd about el Dandy's story is that every opponent (Azteca, Cruz, and Atlantis) I mentioned there was at that time a babyface just like Dandy. By the way, for these cards I have reviewed in this paragraph about el Felino, I have no other results from the matches on those cards.

* This past Wednesday, July 29th, 1992, at la Arena Naucalpan in Naucalpan, Mexico, Mexico, el Rayo de Jalisco junior (Maximino Linares junior) defended his recently-won Mexican National Heavyweight Championship versus the challenge of official number one contender M.S.1 (Pablo Fuentes Reyna). El Rayo de Jalisco junior won in three falls.

* I have two other results of note. One saw la Sirenita (Guadalupe Beil Pena) win the Mexican National Luchadoras' Heavyweight Wrestling Championship by defeating Neftali (Marcella Gallegos Gonzales) two falls to one on a card held Sunday, July 12th, 1992, at an arena in Cuautla, Morelos, Mexico.

* The other results are the results from the top three matches at the card held Sunday, July 26th, 1992, at la Pista Arena Revolucion in Mexico City, Distrito Federal, Mexico. The main event saw el Brazo, el Brazo de Oro, and el Metalico defeat the trio of las Cavernicolas I, II, y III {Popitekus, Troglodita [ex-el Hombre Bala], and Cro Magnon [ex-el Verdugo]} two falls to one. By the way, the reason that el Brazo de Plata is not in this trio is that he has been pulled off all of his bookings by his older brothers for concern for his health. It seems that the EMLL and los Brazos came to an agreement that, even after his second heart attack (legit ones) this year, that he would work the spring/summer tour of la Arena Mexico from June 5th, 1992 to July 19th, 1992, then be pulled off the road to lose some weight and think about the value of things in general. The semifinal of that card saw "The Team From Beyond The Grave" (el Espectro de Ultratumba, el Espectro junior, and el Cadaver de Ultratumba) win an all-rudo battle in three falls from the trio of Ulises Plus (Tony Salazar), el Supremo I, and Gargola el Sultan. And finally, the *tercera* saw young rudos el Bello Incognito and el Escudero Rojo get a nice win fairly high up on the card by defeating el Gran Apache I and el Pegaso two falls to one.

— Now let's go over some recent cards for the EMLL in Mexico City, results of which I do not yet have: —

* The big news is the debut of the EMLL Super-Mini-Estrellas! First of all, three of the four founding midgets, those being la Aguila Solitaria, el Piratita Morgan, and el Espectrito (junior) {the fourth was la Mascarita Sagrada}, have either jumped back to the EMLL from the AAA or have banded together like the ladies have and demanded to be booked separately and with whichever promotion they choose. Anyway, for sure, this past Friday night at la Arena Coliseo in Cancun, Quintana Roo, Mexico, the EMLL Super-Mini-Estrellas debuted. The main event saw Los Minis Intocables del Ring (el Pequeno Pierroth, el Pequeno Jaque Mate, and Masakretito) debut as a trio (el Pequeno Pierroth has actually been around a while) as they took on three debuting tecnicos: Ciclonito Ramirez, el Ultimo Dragoncito, and la Mascarita Magica. The semifinal saw the debut of Tritoncito as a tecnico; he teamed with la Aguilita Solitaria to face el Piratita Morgan and el Espectrito (junior). Tritoncito is a little version of a new EMLL wrestler called Triton. This is not the "Triton" from Los Angeles's Jalisco Promotions; in fact, I believe it is somebody we would all recognize under a new hood, sort of like Yoshihiro Asai as Saigon Dragon, el Ultimo Dragon and Eddy Guerrero as la Mascara Magica. I also do not know how this schism in the super-mini-estrellas, if there really is one, will affect their pending deal to tour for the WWF later this year or early next year.

* In other recent cards, I have only the main event listings. The main event for the Sunday, August 2nd, 1992 card at la Arena Coliseo in Mexico City, Distrito Federal, Mexico, saw la Mascara Magica team up with Lizmark and Ringo Mendoza to face The Big Bang, el Satanico, and la Bestia Salvaje.

* The Sunday, August 2nd, 1992, card at la Arena Naucalpan in Naucalpan, Mexico, Mexico, saw Ringo Mendoza team up with The Black Magic (Norman Smiley), and el Goleador (who is arena booker and co-promoter America's number one protege) to face el Archangel de la Muerte, el Guerrero de la Muerte, and The Big Bang. The card at la Arena Coliseo started at 5:00 pm local time (MDT) and the card at la Arena Naucalpan started at 6:00 pm local time, so even though Ringo Mendoza and The Big Bang were double-booked, since the arenas are only twenty miles apart, they should have easily made both shows.

* El Hijo del Gladiador, who was interviewed in both Super Luchas and Ovaciones in July, worked the main event of the card held Sunday, August 2nd, 1992, at la Arena San Lorenzo in Mexico City, Distrito Federal, Mexico, and in the semifinal of the card held Saturday, August 1st, 1992, at la Pista Arena Revolucion. That's all I have for his tour or the first card, but the main event for the Saturday night card had America, Atlantis, and Saigon Dragon, el Ultimo Dragon facing the rudo "dream team" of Emilio Charles junior, Jose "el Negro" Casas, and la Bestia Salvaje.

* Finally in this vein, the traditional Saturday night card at la Arena Puebla in Puebla, Puebla, Mexico, held Saturday, August 1st, 1992, found The Love Machine (Arthur James Barr), la Mascara Magica (Eduardo "Eddy" Guerrero Llanes), and el Dandy (Roberto Gutierrez Frias) teaming up to face the rudo squadron of la Fiera (Arturo Casco Poblano), el Gran Markus junior (Juan Chavarria junior), and el Hijo del Solitario (?).

* Oh, one other "card" note. On Friday, September 18, 1992, the EMLL will have a show at la Arena Mexico in Mexico City, Distrito Federal, Mexico, to commemorate the 59th anniversary of EMLL lucha libre in Mexico City. The opening match of the five-match card was announced this past week. It will be a match featuring four women from the All Japan Women's Professional Wrestling promotion in Japan. On one team will be the first two lady wrestlers who started the flow of AJWPW lady wrestlers to Mexico, Kyoko Inoue and Toshiyo Yamada. They will be opposed by the team of Aja Kong and Manami Toyota. Normally, Yamada and Toyota are the UWA/WWWA World Tag-Team Champions, but because Yamada and Inoue have the history in Mexico as a tag team, they will be paired for this match. The AJWPW ladies will stay for only one more card, the next night at la Pista Arena Revolucion, where they

will work in a six-woman tag-team match, with I presume Martha "la Aplandora" Villalobos on Aja Kong's team and Lola "Dinamita" Gonzales on the team of Inoue and Yamada.

Now, on to news that is not strictly card-related or result-related:

* I have discovered another "identity." The young duo of Los Kaifanes I y II were revealed this week in the newspapers to be the sons of lucha libre legend Pancho Villalobos. Pancho is also the father of Manuel Villalobos (who works small cards in Texas these days) and Martha "la Aplandora" Villalobos.

* In the most recent Super Luchas magazines that I have seen, favorable write-ups/interviews have been done on el Hijo del Gladiador, the young Kundra, and the veteran Lizmark.

* In the most recent Titanes de Ring magazines that I have seen, favorable write-ups/interviews have been done on Ciclon Ramirez, King Haku, el Pirata Morgan, and luchadora la Diosa de Plata...King Haku said in his interview that he debuted in 1980; that he was from the island of Tonga (population 50,000) and not Samoa as he had been billed in Mexico; that he weighs 100 kg; that he is 185 cm tall; and that he wrestled as an amateur for six years before turning pro...Ciclon Ramirez just mentioned that he wanted another title shot at el Felino...El Pirata Morgan had very little to say...La Diosa de Plata (Fabiola Plancencia Morales) said that she was born on August 3rd, 1960 and debuted in 1989 in a loss to la Mujer Leoparda in Iguala, Guerrero, Mexico. I had previously been told that she debuted in 1978, and debuting at age 29 seems a little late, so maybe the age 18 is actually the correct one.

* Triton, el Halcon de Plata, and el Trueno, the two newest EMLL debuting wrestlers, will be on television from la Arena Coliseo soon. El Trueno is already doing advertisements for the EMLL and the National Lottery.

* The EMLL announced that the current tour of la Arena Coliseo, which began on Friday, July 24th, 1992, will terminate on Friday, August 28th, 1992 (for Friday night cards) and Sunday, August 30th, 1992 (for Sunday afternoon cards). This would mean that the current tour will have run six weeks before it is through.

* In a related development, the EMLL announced that the next tour of la Arena Mexico would begin on Friday, September 4th, 1992 (for Friday night cards) and on Sunday, August 6th, 1992 (for Sunday afternoon cards). No end date was given for the Arena Mexico tour. I bet they just hope they get a full tour in. In 1990, la Arena Mexico literally cracked and they had to miss four weeks to get it repaired. In 1991, right after the 58th anniversary show (9/6/91), the strike occurred. This is the single largest EMLL tour of the year and the last two years they have had a month's revenue go down the drain, never to be recovered.

* El Comando Ruso and Saigon Dragon, el Ultimo Dragon signed up to return to Japan for the tours of August 1992 and September 1992 (that tour being headlined by a huge card at The Yokohama Arena on September 23, 1992) for Genichiro Tenryu's WAR promotion. In return, Tenryu has signed (a while back) officially to appear on the 59th anniversary card for the EMLL on Friday, September 18, 1992.

* Unlike the UWA, the EMLL's television will air as per usual during the Olympics. Televisa and channel 9, XEW-TV, have rights to some of the Olympics broadcasts, but they are showing them all pretty much live, and by the time the "Estrellas de la Lucha Libre" show comes on at 5:00 pm (MDT) Saturday night, the day's Olympics events are over. The show is sent up live on satellite on Saturday nights and again on another satellite (one that often offers better reception) on Sunday mornings.

* OVACIONES newspaper is conducting a fan contest, with the winner getting a free, autographed mask of new luchador el Nuevo Audaz.

* CUSTODIA magazine runs a weekly lucha libre column in the centerfold of its publication. Recently, it has been highly critical of the EMLL (in particular referee "el Gato Montini" {Javier Medina}) and more complimentary towards the AAA [nobody is complimentary these days about the UWA]. So, it was no surprise to learn that the EMLL at a recent (unspecified) card had denied access backstage to CUSTODIA reporter "el Chiquitin Enmascarado" and photographer Jose Guadalupe Martinez. The 8/11/92 issue of the magazine excoriates the EMLL for its backstage pass access policies.

* The EMLL, who held its first-ever CMLL convention this past March 15, 1991, in Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, Mexico, has announced that they will hold a second convention. This one will be held in Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico. It will be held one weekend in October 1992 (probably the first one after the September/October tour of la Arena Mexico is over). Part of the stated business to be covered will be the replacement of vice-president Antonio H. Pena and public relations director Jose Luis Ramirez, who both left the EMLL on May 6th, 1992, to form the AAA.

* The Big Bang, a masked, supposedly American wrestler, is in. He joins, as foreigners currently working full-time for the EMLL in Mexico, Casanova, el Vampiro Canadiense, Saigon Dragon, el Ultimo Dragon, Yumiko Hotta, Suzuka Minami, The Love Machine, Aaron Grondy, Nitron, Kaoru Maeda, and Salomon Grondy. Because of the new larger income tax on foreign wrestlers' earnings (up from 10% to 30%), I don't expect this list to change much in the future.

* Well, I do have the late EMLL news just now (most of it, anyway). First, el Dandy has successfully retained his CMLL World Middleweight Championship now twice within the past two weeks. He won in the semifinal of the card held Thursday, July 30th, 1992, at la Arena Isabel in Cuernavaca, Morelos, Mexico, by defeating Jose "el Negro" Casas two falls to one. He also defeated Casas in the main event of a card held Sunday, July 19th, 1992, at la Arena Villahermosa in Villahermosa, Tabasco, Mexico (the current residence of Canek).

* I also found out that M. S. 1 defeated el Rayo de Jalisco junior two falls to one in a *mano a mano* non-title match at la Arena Naucalpan on Wednesday, July 22nd, 1992, which was the reason Rayo put up his belt the following Wednesday.

* And now on to the television taping held Friday, July 31st, 1992 at la Arena Coliseo in Mexico City, Distrito Federal, Mexico. The *inicio* of the card did not air on television. It saw el Halcon Negro junior and el Escudero Rojo team up to face the tecnico duo of el Gran Apache I and el Filoso. The television opener saw highlights of the July 28th la Arena Coliseo main event, where Apolo Dantes pinned el Hijo del Solitario with The Northern Lights Suplex Hold in the third and final fall. Lucha Libre Weekly correspondent David M. Scherer, who lives in Seaville, New Jersey but whose mailing address is Post Office Box 612, Marmora, New Jersey, 08823-0612 (contact him for information on obtaining UWA and EMLL tapes) now calls el Hijo del Solitario "that yellow rat bastard sap sucker." Last week he called him "Mister Potato Head with pipe cleaner arms." I'd hate to think what Scherer would call him if he really hated him. Anyway, the first full match that aired on television was the *segunda* at the arena. It saw rudos el Archangel de la Muerte (who is very very good), el Guerrero de la Muerte (he's good), and a third wrestler who wore a USA ring jacket but whose name Scherer did not catch {note: Enjambre of the old "la Plaga del Ring" creature feature trio was supposed to be the third member of this team but Enjambre no-showed} defeated the tecnico squadron of Eclipse (he's alright but is absolutely tiny, smaller than el Rey Misterio junior), el Metalico, and la Aguila Solitaria two falls to one. The third fall saw el Archangel de la Muerte pin I think el Metalico cleanly to give his team the victory. This match was said to be pretty good, solid but unspectacular. Scherer rated this match at ** 1/2.

The second match on television was the *tercera* at the arena. Here, Apolo Dantes emerged victorious, in a Pyrrhic victory. Dantes teamed with Ciclon Ramirez and el Cachorro Mendoza to defeat the rudo squadron of el Hijo del Solitario, el Felino, and Javier "el Monarca" Cruz two falls to one. El Felino took the first fall by pinning el Cachorro Mendoza with a *senon*. The second fall saw Ciclon Ramirez pin el Felino with *la huitacartana* while Mendoza reversed a small package (*la enredadera*) attempt by Cruz. The third fall saw all three rudos (but especially Solitario) bust up Dantes, who bled big-time (in the EMLL, nobody bleeds just a little). The rudos kept pounding on Dantes and refusing to pin him, but Dantes would not submit. Finally, for refusing to pin him, the rudos were disqualified, giving the victory to the tecnicos. This was graded at ** 1/4.

The semifinal at the arena and on television saw the rudo team of el Gran Markus junior, el Supremo I, and The Big Bang (who turned out to be Ken Rinehurst, aka Jack Victory) defeated the unusual tecnico team of el Dandy, Aaron Grondy, (Michael Shaw), la Mascara Magica (Eddy Guerrero). The finish of the first fall saw a relatively standard rudo win with el Gran Markus junior splashing el Dandy for the fall. The second fall saw Aaron Grondy climb to the top rope and go for a big splash, but he missed and splash el Dandy and la Mascara Magica by mistake. While el Dandy and Magica were arguing with and shoving Grondy, the rudos snuck up from behind and got the two smaller tecnicos into submission holds for the fall and the victory. I expect this is the beginning of Grondy's turn into a hee! Makhan Singh. This was graded at ** 1/2

The main event was rated as a super match. The rudo squadron of Emilio Charles junior, la Bestia Salvaje, and Jose "el Negro" Casas, a rudo "dream team" consisting of in my opinion the three best rudos the EMLL has (and along with Fuerza Guerrera and Jerry Estrada three of the best five rudos in all of Mexico) won two out of three falls from the tecnico squadron of Lizmark, Atlantis, and Saigon Dragon, el Ultimo Dragon. The first fall saw Casas foul Dragon behind the referee's back and gain the pinfall. The second fall went to the tecnicos when Dragon pinned Salvaje with the Asai moonsault inside the ring (called *la quebrada*) while Lizmark made Casas submit and Charles just ran away from Atlantis. The third fall saw Charles gain a significant advantage over Atlantis and Charles continually making the belt sign with his hands around his *cintura* (waist, not forehead as I had erroneously reported a couple of weeks back), setting up that feud. In fact, Charles got a victory cleanly over Atlantis. After he ripped the mask of Atlantis to shreds, Charles made Atlantis submit clean, and then immediately challenged Atlantis for the latter's NWA World Middleweight Championship. Atlantis replied by challenging Charles to a *mascara contra caballera* match. I expect the title match. During the third fall, near the end, Lizmark and el Ultimo Dragon did super dives out of the ring onto Casas and Salvaje. This match was reported to have more than made up for the relatively mediocre level of the first three matches, and was rated at ****. One other note from the television show. Televisa is selling mail-order wrestling buddies of Konnan el Barbaro, Octagon, and la Mascara Sagrada. In a commercial that aired for the dolls (right before the EMLL show began), a little boy was punching and beating up the dolls and ripping them apart. There's something funny about a boy's destroying of AAA wrestler's dolls on a commercial that is on the EMLL show.

UWA

Believe it or not, I do not have one single result from the UWA this week. I also have only three news notes that are not related to card line-ups. One is that for the second straight week, their television show on Imevision, channel 13 in Mexico City, was pre-empted at its normal 2:30 pm to 4:00 pm local (MDT) time for the Olympics. This will happen next Saturday (August 8th) and I expect them to return on Saturday, August 15th, 1992, with a card probably taped on Friday, August 7th, 1992, at la Arena Netzahualcoyotl in suburban Netzahualcoyotl, Mexico, Mexico. The second news note is that the UWA office (namely president Carlos Maynes Flores) announced that in September the UWA would hold a tournament to crown a new UWA World Junior Light Heavyweight Champion. Pedro "el Perro" Aguayo was the last holder of that title. He had won the title while working for the EMLL, on a EMLL house show, on Friday, June 29, 1990, at the EMLL's la Arena Mexico, from EMLL wrestler Ringo Mendoza when Mendoza "injured his shoulder" and the ring doctor ruled Mendoza unable to continue in the third fall. Aguayo has defended the belt only twice in the twenty-five months since, and was formally stripped of the title for non-activity back in March of 1992. The third news item is that, after heavy publicity, and for the second straight Sunday, Abdullah The Butcher (Larry Shreeve) postponed the beginning of his return to Mexico City for the first time in almost ten years.

And that leads us into the news of the cards of this week. Butcher was supposed to be on the semifinal at the traditional Sunday afternoon card at the "el Toreo de Cuatro Caminos" bull ring in suburban Naucalpan, Mexico, Mexico, and Canek was supposed to defend his UWA World Heavyweight Championship versus el Gigante Samoano Kokina in the main event. Neither happened. The Canek versus Kokina match was changed to a *mano a mano* non-title match in the main event. The semifinal saw Dos Caras, Enrique Vera, and el Villano III team up to face the rudo squadron of el Bufalo Allen, el Signo, and The Killer (managed by Andy Barrow). The *tercera* had The Babe Face I, Miguel "el Negro" Navarro, and The Black Power II booked to face Haraoki "el Gran" Hamada, el Villano IV, and el Villano V. The *segunda* had a *revancha en superlibre* bout as the four-man tecnico team of el Tortugillo I Donatelo (aka Rocky Santana), el Ojo de Tigre, el Gran Apache I, and la Flecha tried to save face from their loss last week by challenging the rudo team of Shu, el Guerrero, el Scorpio junior, el Bucanero junior, and Kahos I. The *inicial* saw Zeus, Casandro, and el Lobo Rubio booked to face el Matematico I, Sato (Japan's Universal Wrestling Federation wrestler known as Sakigake Gantetsu), and el Celestial.

* The card held Monday, August 3rd, 1992, at la Arena Puebla in Puebla, Puebla, Mexico, saw the debut of a new regular six-man trio tag-team for Canek. "Los Nuevos Asesinos del Ring" will consist of Canek, The Doctor Wagner junior, and The Killer (managed by Andy Barrow). Wagner here is taking Fishman's place. They team up for the first time in the main event versus Dos Caras, Enrique Vera, and Haraoki "el Gran" Hamada.

* The main event of the card held Sunday, August 2nd, 1992, at la Arena Toluca in Toluca, the capital city of the state of Mexico in the country of Mexico, saw Kahos junior and el Capitan Furia take on The Black Birds I and II.

* The main event of the card held Sunday, August 2nd, 1992, at la Arena Lopez Mateos in Tlalnepantla, Mexico, Mexico, saw all four members of the sorely underused team of "La Ola Lila" (Rudy "Perfumado" Reyna {who is the favorite wrestler of Roy Lucier's mom}, Pimpinela Escarlata, May Flowers, and Casandro) face the four-man team consisting of el Nuevo Huracan Ramirez, el Nuevo Huracan Ramirez junior, Ciclón Mackey, and Imevision. That's right; the UWA has introduced a new wrestler with mask, costume, and gimmick of the television network they're on.

* The main event of the traditional Saturday night card at la Arena Isabel in Cuernavaca, Morelos, Mexico, held this week on Saturday, August 1st, 1992, saw Canek team with The Doctor Wagner junior to face el Bufalo Allen and el Gigante Samoano Kokina.

* The traditional Friday night card held at la Arena Netzahualcoyotl in suburban Netzahualcoyotl, Mexico, Mexico, held this week on Friday, July 31st, 1992, saw a main event featuring Canek, The Doctor Wagner junior, and el Loco Zandokan facing the team of el Gigante Samoano Kokina, el Signo, and el Bufalo Allen. The semifinal saw Dos Caras, el Villano III, and Enrique Vera face el Scorpio junior, Shu, el Guerrero, and The Killer (managed by Andy Barrow). The *tercera* saw Sato and Haraoki "el Gran" Hamada team up to face el Villano IV and el Villano V in a rare all-tecnico match. The *segunda* saw Casandro and el Lobo Rubio booked to face el Ninja Sasuke and el Matematico I. And the *inicial* saw Resplandor challenged by el Sevillano.

* And finally in summing up the UWA cards of the week, the traditional Thursday night card at la Pista Arena Revolucion in Mexico City, Distrito Federal, Mexico, was held on Thursday, July 30th, 1992. The main event saw los Cazadores del Cabezas I y II (The Head Hunters A and B), who are now the W*ING World Tag-Team Champions, team up to face the former UWA World and current WWA World and UWA/UWF Intercontinental Tag-Team Champions los Cowboys/Efectivos (Silver King and el Texano). The semifinal saw Canek, The Doctor Wagner junior, and el Loco Zandokan face Haraoki "el Gran" Hamada, el Villano IV, and el Villano V. The *segunda* saw The King, el Villano I, and el Tigre Canadiense (Mike Lozansky) face el Engendro, el Scorpio I, and el Scorpio junior. And the *inicial* saw el Espanto IV, el Espanto V, and Casandro booked to face Aero Flash, young Korak, and el Matematico I.

AAA

Let's start with the only title change of the week. On Tuesday night, July 28th, 1992, at la Arena Coliseo de Monterrey in Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, Mexico, los Destruyores (Tony Arce and el Vulcano) defeated the team of el Volador and el Misterioso to regain the Mexican National Parejas Championships that they had lost to this same team back on March 8, 1992, at la Arena Mexico. This begins the third title reign for los Destruyores.

And speaking of la Arena Coliseo de Monterrey, that is where the AAA held its weekly television taping on Friday night, July 31st, 1992. This taping aired Sunday morning, August 2nd, 1992, from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm, on Mexico City's Televisa's channel four and on satellite at the same time, and will air on Galavision next Sunday, August 9th, 1992. The show that aired in Mexico City was only ninety minutes long, consisting of three matches, and I expect one extra match will be added for Galavision consumption. The opener on television showed that I was wrong to think that Psicosis was Erick Casas Ruiz. They teamed up on the same rudo team. In that match, Heavy Metal (Erick Casas Ruiz, ex el-Caneio Casas), Psicosis (who really is a Tijuana local guy), and Mister Condor defeated Winners, Super Calo, and el Rey Misterio junior two falls to one. In the first fall, Psicosis was pinned after a missile kick (a drop kick from off of the top rope) by Super Calo. The second fall saw the missed dive of the year, when el Rey Misterio junior did a moonsault press outside of the ring and totally missed, landing flat on his stomach outside the ring; he was counted out of the ring to end the second fall. The third fall saw Mister Condor (who, now that I have seen, I do not think is as good as I was led to believe) foul Winners behind the referees' backs and get a pinfall for the fall and the match. In the third fall, though, all three tecnicos did nice dives. This was rated by David Scherer at *** 1/2. The semifinal on television saw the *caballero contra caballero* match between super-mini-estrellas el Piratita Morgan and Jerrito Estrada. On television, you might have gotten the clear impression from the last four weeks of shows that Morgan was supposed to be the rudo and Estrada the tecnico. But, since this was apparently Morgan's last night in, they switched things at the last minute. Jerrito Estrada was accompanied to ringside by Jerry "el Puma" Estrada, while Morgan was accompanied to the ring by no one (after all, el Pirata Morgan works for the EMLL, although subtly this implies that Morgan does not care or is chicken to represent his mini namesake). Jerry Estrada interfered enough to cost Morgan the match. Morgan went outside the ring to get some hot water to throw onto Jerrito, but heel referee el Tirantes got hit by mistake. While Tirantes was rolling around, Jerry and Jerrito laid into Piratita, and when Tirantes was rolled back into the ring by Jerry, Jerrito had Piratita in a submission hold, which el Tirantes called. Then Morgan had his head shaved and waved "adios." Rated at ** 3/4. The main event saw Cien Caras, el Cobarde Segundo, and Fishman defeat Konnan el Barbaro, Pedro "el Perro" Aguayo, and el Sicodelico two falls to one. Caras pinned Konnan to end the first fall. El Sicodelico just stood in the corner and waved, refusing to tag in to help his team. All three rudos in the second fall pounded away on Aguayo (this script is getting real old seeing Aguayo and Konnan just beat up week after week after week) until both Aguayo and Konnan were knocked out of the ring. Then, el Sicodelico gets in the ring to shake the hands of the three rudos, but they start pounding on el Sicodelico too! The faces run in and instead of saving el Sicodelico start attacking el Tirantes! Finally, Fishman pinned Perro and all three rudos made Konnan submit to the give the rudos a two straight fall victory. Then after the rudo victory is announced, el Sicodelico raises his hands like *he* has won, but the rudos attack him again and for the last few minutes of the show the rudos just pound away on poor old el Sicodelico. This was rated at ** 3/4.

And, on Galavision this past Sunday (8/2/92), the AAA card taped on Friday, July 24th, 1992, at el Auditorio Morelos in Aguascalientes, Aguascalientes, Mexico was broadcast. The television opener saw the tecnico team of Thunderbird (a star of the Tijuana circuits), el Rey Misterio junior (Oscar Gutierrez, ex-Colibri, another star of the Tijuana circuits), and captain Super Kiss (another star of the Tijuana circuits) defeat the rudo squadron of Psicosis (another star of the Tijuana circuits), Mister Condor (a Mexico City-based independent wrestler until March 1992 when he began a stint for the UWA before jumping to the AAA; this was his AAA debut match), and captain el Indomito (former boxer Vincente Carbajal, a former UWA star and before that a regular on the Ciudad Juarez circuit) two falls to one in a total elapsed time of 19:54. I thought this was by far the best match of the show. The first fall saw el Indomito pin Super Kiss with a *senton* at the 10:36 mark. The second fall went 3:59 before all three rudos were counted out of the ring after wild dives by the tecnicos. The third fall went 5:19 before babyface referee Jose "Pepe" "Tropi" Casas disqualified the rudos for handcuffing the arms of el Rey Misterio junior backwards around the ring post. Heel television commentator Arturo Rivera, who is just terrible by the way, commenting about the costume of Psicosis said that the costume was "super-original." What a crock. Still, as bad as Rivera was, he is tons better than the AAA's version of Vince McMahon's voice, Enrique Vermudes, who does not know the name of a lot of the holds or moves but does know the term *plexus solar* real well. As one EMLL wrestler said to me once (paraphrasing), these announcers are the shits. Oh well, at least the action in the ring was good. Psicosis did the old Randy Savage double axe-handle drop from the top rope outside the ring but flew way up in the air and over halfway along the apron while doing it. Then, in the first fall, Psicosis gets to the top rope but no, Mister Condor pins the guy Psicosis was supposed to pin with the belly-to-belly suplex. The second fall was very instructive for young rudos and tecnicos in training. Watch it again and see how every bit of babyface heat that the tecnicos got (until the dives at the end of the fall) was gotten for them by the work of Psicosis. The dives, though, were sensational, though the camera missed

most of el Rey Misterio junior's dive. The third fall saw el Rey Misterio junior have his mask ripped, while Thunderbird had a few nice spots. But Psicosis was the star of this show -- from out of nowhere this guy now looks like one of the best workers in the world. Psicosis even atomic knee crotched Misterio way up high on the ring post. A great match for some really raw youngsters. I gave it *** 1/2.

The next match saw the *revancha en superlibre* match with the super-mini-estrellas. This time, the team of el Picudito, la Parquita, and captain Jerrito Estrada won two straight falls from el Espectrito (junior), el Pequeno Cobarde, and captain el Piratita Morgan. Though both teams worked as heels, clearly Estrada's team was the face squad here. The first fall went 5:50 before Estrada pinned Morgan with a *tope en reversa* from off of the top rope. The second fall went 4:43 before Estrada made Morgan submit to the *la cavernaria* submission hold. What happened here is that Estrada appeared to be knocked out after missing a Lyger flip dive onto Estrada, so Morgan got back into the ring, resting, waiting for the count of twenty to signify a count out of the ring victory. Suddenly, Estrada recovered, snuck back into the ring, and got the submission hold. Then, after the match, Morgan and Estrada issued the challenges for the next week's hair match. I thought this was fair, even if Morgan's best move was his spitting, and I gave it ** 1/2.

In between the midjets' match, they aired the semifinal. There, the tecnico team of el Sicodelico, Pedro "el Perro" Aguayo, and captain Konnan el Barbaro won two out of three falls from the rudo squadron of el Angel Blanco junior, Mascara Ano Dos Mil, and captain Cien Caras. I can't tell you a time because the first fall whistle never blew. They started the match, then Konnan el Barbaro came down to ringside at a leisurely pace, then they had the introductions, then they re-started the match. The first fall ended when el Angel Blanco junior pinned el Sicodelico with a diving body press from off of the top rope (very nicely done). Konnan, meanwhile, had been knocked into the ringside seats. The second fall saw the babyface comeback as aguayo pinned Blanco after a *senton*. The third fall never officially got started. Heels el Cobarde Segundo and el Indomito came down to ringside and once they interfered referee Pepe Casas called for the automatic disqualification to end the match. The outside interference consisted solely of el Indomito handing el Cobarde II a pair of handcuffs, with which el Cobarde II cold-cooked Konnan (actually, the replays showed that he pretty much missed). First Konnan acted knocked out. Then paramedics put a neck brace on him. Then they carted him away on an ambulance. Then they applied those two things to his chest that they use when they try to revive a dead person with an electric shock. This was far worse than anything that Fritz Von Erich ever implied, and changed the rating of a ** match into the maximum lowest possible grade, -*****. Aguayo juiced and el Sicodelico ran to set up his heel turn.

The main event turned out to be a far better match than I had expected. Universo Dos Mil retained his Mexican National Light Heavyweight Championship by defeating official number one challenger la Mascara Sagrada two falls to one. Universo Dos Mil was seconded by his older brother Cien Caras, while la Mascara Sagrada's second was el Sicodelico. This was almost a Japanese-style match. The first fall went 4:19 before Universo Dos Mil submitted to the Indian Death Lock, a move I have never seen used in lucha libre. The second fall saw la Mascara Sagrada submit clean to a neck stretcher submission hold in 4:27. The third fall went 5:41 before Cien Caras kicked la Mascara Sagrada in the head, allowing Universo to escape a sure submission and get a pinfall, while el Sicodelico was distracting referee Pepe Casas. The story of the match was el Sicodelico's heel turn, as he aided Universo Dos Mil more than he aided la Mascara Sagrada. But the match showed me some things from the two wrestlers that I wasn't expecting. La Mascara Sagrada did a Jumbo Tsuruta-style backdrop and knee pounder, while Universo Dos Mil did that abdominal stretch pinfall guillotine move that Tatum Fujinami pinned Ric Flair with at The Tokyo Dome last year. Each did nice dives and la Mascara Sagrada did nice dropkicks and one nice missile kick. As Dave Meltzer would say, really, these guys couldn't have done a better match. *** 1/4. No Cartometro/features this week.

Here are some of the recent AAA cards from which I do not yet have any results:

* On Saturday, August 1st, 1992, at la Arena Apatlaco in Iztapalapa, Mexico, Mexico, Konnan el Barbaro (it takes more than just your average everyday myocardial infarction to hold this guy back!) teamed with Pedro "el Perro" Aguayo to face el Angel Blanco junior and Universo Dos Mil in the main event.

* On Friday, July 31st, 1992, at el Auditorio Jose Maria Arteaga in Queretaro, Queretaro, Mexico, the main event featured The Blue Panther, Fuerza Guerrera, and el Espanto junior taking on the tecnico team of el Solar I, el Hijo del Santo, and Octagon.

* Also on Friday, July 31st, 1992, but at el Auditorio Municipal in Leon, Guanajuato, Mexico, the main event here saw The Ice Killer, el Angel Blanco junior, and "el CHacho" Herodes team up to face the tecnico team of el Fantasma, el Angel Azteca, and Tinieblas I (with Alushe).

* And finally, also on Friday, July 31st, 1992, at el Auditorio Benito Juarez in Veracruz, Veracruz, Mexico, the main event saw the tecnico team of Super Muneco, la Mascara Sagrada, and el Hijo de Tinieblas team up to face Universo Dos Mil, Mascara Ano Dos Mil, and el Indomito.

In AAA news that is not specifically card-related or result-related....El Hijo del Diablo, el Hijo de Tineiblas, Tineiblas I, Alushe, and Mister Condor have all jumped here this week....Japanese wrestling magazine Weekly Gong, in its August 13th, 1992, issue, reports that Dos Caras has given his notice at the UWA and will be joining the AAA. I find this hard to believe, as Dos Caras is the UWA Union Shop Steward and in direct competition with the AAA union. Dos Caras was on the first UWA card, on January 16, 1975 at el Palacio de los Deportes in Mexico City, and has been affiliated with the UWA every day since....Weekly Gong also reported that joint negotiations between the AAA, the WWF, and el Palacio de los Deportes (which it says seats 30,000 fans) are ongoing, and that the AAA is close to having the Mexico City arena it so desperately needs.... Speaking of the AAA union, they announced on Wednesday, July 29th, 1992, their executive board. In descending order of power, the board consists of: Fuerza Guerrera, The Ice Killer, el Justiciero, el Magnate, el Solar I, Dorrell Dixon, Vicky Carranza, el Hijo del Diablo, Rambo, el Halcon 78, Octagon, and el Pequeno Goliath, who wrestles as one of the three member of "los Micros Destructores del Ring."... Dave Scherer wants everyone to know that his grade, ** 1/4, and not my grade, **** 1/4, is the proper grade for the semifinal of the match that aired on Galavision this past Sunday, July 25th, 1992....Plans are proceeding apace for the big AAA card and convention to be held Friday, August 14th, 1992, in Acapulco, Guerrero, Mexico, where we have the debut of the mixed micro/regular-sized partner tag-team match....Fuercita Guerrera, the mini and not micro copied after Fuerza Guerrera, and who debuted in 1989, returns to AAA rings in August....A new debuting guy is "The Blue Danger," who is in reality the Welterweight Champion of the state of Queretaro....Musical, another protege of Super Muneco, was interviewed in the latest Titanes del Ring. He said that he was born in Tijuana, Baja California Norte in 1963; that he debuted as Musical in May of 1991; that he is 180 cm tall; and that he is a tecnico....I have one other AAA result; the main event from the card of Friday, July 10th, 1992, at el Auditorio Jose Maria Arteaga in Queretaro, Queretaro, Mexico, saw los Hermanos Dinamita (Cien Caras, Mascara Ano Dos Mil, and Universo Dos Mil) defeat Pedro "el Perro" Aguayo, el Fantasma, and la Mascara Sagrada two falls to one in a non-title match (los Hermanos Dinamita are still the Mexican National Trios Champions). **LATE NEWS:** First, some "early" late news. In the UWA, I found two results from the card held Friday, July 10th, 1992, at la Arena Netzahualcoyotl in Netzahualcoyotl, Mexico, Mexico. The main event saw The Can-Am Express I y II defeat los Cowboys two falls to one to retain the UWA World Parejas Championships. And, in the semifinal, the rudo team of Canek, The Doctor Wagner junior, and el Loco Zandokan drew in the third fall with Dos Caras, el Villano III, and Tineiblas I (with Alushe). Also, a new Japanese called "Kuroneko" is said to be coming here soon....In EMLL news, here are some results. On Tuesday, July 14th, 1992, at la Arena Coliseo, the main event saw el Satanico, el Hijo del Solitario, and el Gran Markus junior defeat Lizmark I, el Hijo de Lizmark, and Apolo Dantes in three falls; the semifinal saw El Jalisco, la Mano Negra, and Ciclon Ramirez win in three falls over el Felino, el Supremo I, and Ulises Plus, the third saw Bronce, Plata, and Oro win two out of three falls from el Archangel de la Muerte, el Espectro de Ultratumba, and Enjambre; the second saw el Halcon Dorado II and la Aguila de Plata defeat Babe Richard and el Bello Incognito in three falls; and the opener saw el Pegaso and el Guerrero Samurai II win in three over Tor-Ver (the son of Gran Davis who looked real good here) and Master....The main event of the card held Sunday, July 12th, 1992, at la Arena Coliseo saw Ringo Mendoza defeat el Gran Markus junior in a *mano a mano* singles match with no other stipulations in three falls while the semifinal saw el Faraon, el Jalisco, and Chavo Guerrero defeat Masakre, Ulises Plus, and Jaque Mate in three falls.... July 17th's opener at la Arena Mexico saw el Espectro junior, el Felino, and el Espectro de Ultratumba defeat Bronce, Oro, and Plata two falls to one. Yumiko Hotta, Suzuka Minami, and actress Gloria Trevi (as "La Rosa De Las Estrellas") were introduced to the crowd that night....El Duro and el Capitan America won two out of three falls from State Of Mexico Welterweight Champion Kennich and el Macabro Rojo in a wild and bloody main event of the card held Wednesday, July 15th, 1992, at la Arena Ecatepec in Ecatepec, Mexico, Mexico (they used bricks and stones as foreign objects here and Kennich was a bloody mess). That set up el Duro's challenge for Kennich's title on the next week's card on July 22nd....Saigon Dragon, el Ultimo Dragon (Yoshihiro Asai) was interviewed in both Super Luchas and Titanes del Ring this week. He said his father is an electrical engineer; that he is from Setagaya, Tokyo, Japan; that he is 180 cm tall; and that he weighs 88 kg....El Supremo I had little to say in Titanes del Ring....Irma Aguilar was a recent guest of Hara Kiri and Wifrido Gonzalez on the Grupo ACIR radio station's lucha libre program....Lynx just debuted for the EMLL on Tuesday, July 7th, 1992, teaming with Enjambre and el Guerrero de la Muerte to lose to el Solar II, Javier "el Chamacoco" Valaguez, and el Guerrero Samurai II at la Arena Coliseo. Lynx said in Super Luchas that he is a middleweight and a rudo....Ultimatum was also interviewed in Super Luchas. He debuted on Thursday, January 2, 1992, at la Pitsa Arena Revolucion; he got his ring name from a musical group that appeared on "Siempre en Domingo con Raul Velasco." He said he was born in 1972 in the colonia Aeropuerto of Mexico City, Distrito Federal, Mexico, and that he is 189 cm tall and weighs 90 kg. He is a tecnico whose maestro was la Aguila Blanca....Finally, results for Sunday, August 2nd, 1992, at the EMLL's traditional Sunday show at la Arena Coliseo saw, in the main event, the rudo squadron of

MINI-BIOGRAPHY: APOLO DANTES

I know, I said that this week was going to be Vandal Drummond, and I thought about also running his mini-biography on the inside on page seven, but I wanted his spot to be on the outside (i. e., best) spot, so that will be saved until next week. This week, I just had to go with Apolo Dantes, considering the week he just had. Dantes, as I said before, is Jose Luis Amezcua Curiel junior, the son of legendary luchador and "bad-ass street fighter" Alfonso Dantes (Jose Luis Amezcua), who himself was a five-time NWA World Light Heavyweight Champion. Apolo Dantes was born on September 23, 1968, and debuted on December 4, 1988, in a match at la Arena Coliseo de Guadalajara in Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico (which is Guadalajara's biggest and most famous wrestling arena) under the ring name "Apolo Dantes." On the same card, as his tag-team partner, was a wrestler called All Star, who turned out to be Apolo's brother Cesar Dantes (real name Luis Alfonso Amezcua Curiel, the "Alfonso" middle name given in honor of his father's ring name). Both Dantes brothers were born in the home town of their father, that *machissimo* Mexican city, Guadalajara. Apolo Dantes stands 180 cm tall legitimately (5'10 1/2") and weighs about 94 kg (about 207 pounds) legitimately, which in Mexico makes him a natural light heavyweight and for the future a likely heavyweight. Apolo trained at an early age to be a professional wrestler. He trained with his father, Alfonso Dantes, and his *padrino* (godfather), both in the family and the wrestling sense, who was legendary Guadalupean luchador Alberto Munoz. As he got better, Apolo Dantes was sent to train at the gymnasium of lucha libre's most renowned *maestro*, Guadalajara's own Cuauhtemoc "el Diablo" Velasco. There, he stood out amongst a bright class of future stars, and was sent out onto the road after only a few months at Velasco's side. He debuted as a middleweight (at that height it's hard to believe he was ever a middleweight) and won the Jalisco middleweight title in March of 1989 (his fourth full month in the business) from la Arana. As word spread to the capital of lucha libre, Mexico City, about the rising young son of Alfonso Dantes, offers were extended for Dantes to come in and he did, debuting in Mexico City on April 7, 1989, at la Arena Mexico. Since his EMLL debut until this week, Dantes had won no titles (nor challenged for any), but had gotten involved in several major hair feuds. He has twice won the hair of Javier "el Monarca" Cruz, once from el Comando Ruso, and once from el Cachorro Mendoza. Also, the EMLL recognizes Apolo Dantes as its prototypical baby-face babyface, so three times wrestlers have turned heel on Dantes -- Javier "el Monarca" Cruz, Eddy Guerrero, and el Hijo del Solitario. Except for the Guerrero turn, those feuds have all turned into money at the box office and good, solid matches; in fact, he is Mexico's master of The Northern Lights Suplex Hold finishing maneuver. Dantes, of course, is now the 48th NWA World Light Heavyweight Champion, having defeated el Satanico on Saturday, July 25th, 1992, at la Arena Puebla. In my 1991 annual, I said of Dantes, "to pick out among the 200-plus names listed here a youngster with the greatest potential for superstardom in Mexico is virtually impossible, but Apolo Dantes would be an awfully good pick." I guess I was right, as this guy has main event status and bright future written all over him.

FROM: LUCHA LIBRE WEEKLY

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 24

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 5, 1992

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1427 WEST DICKENS AVENUE

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60614-3003

(312) 477-3996

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